

January 27, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

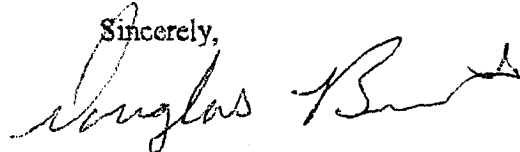
Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

The Microsoft antitrust case was unnecessary to begin with, but the fact that it has dragged out this long is absolutely ridiculous. I do not believe that the push for additional litigation is in the interest of justice; I am of the opinion that the remaining litigants just want what everybody else wants - to get into Microsoft's wallet. A settlement has been proposed that, while it may not be ideal, is acceptable to both Microsoft and the Department of Justice. Next week, the courts will determine whether the settlement is acceptable. I believe it is in the best interest of the consumer to settle now rather than to drag this case on any longer.

Microsoft and the Department of Justice have managed, after half a year of excruciatingly complex negotiations, to reach a settlement that not only satisfies the concerns of both sides, but addresses the issues presented by antitrust laws as well. For example, Microsoft has agreed not to enter into any contract that would require a third party to distribute Microsoft products at a fixed percentage. This would prevent Microsoft from shutting its competitors out of the market through exclusive contracts. Microsoft has also agreed to disclose source code and interfaces integral to the Windows operating system for use by its competitors.

I do not believe that the settlement is in any way deficient. In fact, I believe it would be best for the economy and the American public to finalize the settlement now. I urge you to take the appropriate action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas Bird", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Douglas Bird